

DEL MAR FEATURED RACE OF THE DAY

By Frank R. Scatoni

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Date: 11/24/24

Race 9: \$50K optional-claiming/\$50K starter allowance at 8.5-furlongs on turf (rails at 18-ft.)

Post: approx. post 4:30 p.m. PST

OVERVIEW

Today's contest race is a very competitive starter/optional-claimer contested at 8.5-furlongs on the turf. It's for horses who have never won two races, or if they have, they have to run for a \$50K tag. It's so hard to get a read on the class of these kinds of horses, so they are not my favorite types of races, but let's see if we can sniff out a winner—and at a price!

#1 SIX MAGPIES (IRE) (20/1) was 32/1 at this level last time at Santa Anita, and he ran to those long odds. That said, that race was 8-furlongs, and this deep closer gets a little more ground to play with today. I absolutely respect his come-home times, but he'll need some pace help today. Still, I've seen way worse 20/1 shots. Let's blow up the tote. GRADE: A.

#2 BALDORO (9/2) has run respectably against winners since breaking his maiden back in May. He makes the second start of his form cycle, and you have to respect how he finished up last time, passing horses despite having any pace to close into. GRADE: A.

#3 BIG JUANITO (6/1) has a nice late kick, but he will definitely have his work cut out for him as he launches his bid from way off the pace. He was 8/1 at this level last time, and he ran on late to finish fifth. That was at a mile; today he gets a little more ground to play with, and that should help his cause. GRADE: B.

#4 MCGREGOR LAKE (12/1) couldn't beat conditional-claimers last time, which I don't like, but O'Neill took him for \$25K and brings him back protected, which I do like. He should get a good tracking trip, and this seems like a decent spot for him off the claim, but I prefer others. GRADE: C.

#5 ONE TIME MARK (10/1) has tactical speed, so he should be prominent early. He got a good trip to break his maiden, finally, last time in start number 11. Can he come right back and get another W? Glatt has been so hot, so why not? Still, I think last time was the time when he fired big off the layoff. GRADE: C.

#6 CUPID'S CRUSADER (8/1) hasn't been able to beat conditional-claimers, and that concerns me. Throw in the fact that his one two-turn turf race was no good, and I'm fine letting this one beat me. I'm kind of surprised he's only 8/1 on the line; he was 9/1 last time against weaker foes, and Rispoli ends up on another. GRADE: X.

#7 NASHOBA'S JOY (12/1) was no good at this level two back, but he did have a wide trip, so I won't be too harsh. That said, he could only manage third against weaker conditional-claimers last time, and that concerns me. I also don't like that J.J. hops off. GRADE: X.

#8 BAD TO THE BONES (10/1) makes his first start for Mandella after a blah campaign back East when he was mostly racing on dirt against allowance runners. When he dropped into a claiming race back in January, he finished third and was a voided-claim. I usually don't like to see that, but I do like to see that Mandella has given him a lot of time, and he brings this one back protected. That mile turf race back in September 2023 is better than it looks on paper. He had no pace to close into, yet he ran on late, posting a fast come-home time. Sneaky? GRADE: A.

#9 RASTAMAN VIBE (3/1) has been on my "no-bet" list since June 13, when I loved him at 19/1, and he ran a great race, but he showed that he wasn't good enough to beat allowance foes. That's okay, this is an easier spot—but he was in a similar spot last time at Santa Anita, and he still couldn't get the W. Granted, he finished third, and he only lost by a neck. He always comes running on late, and perhaps the extra ground will help his cause—and J.J. sticking around can't hurt. Still, I'm in no hurry to bet him at a short price. GRADE: B.

#10 PRESIDER (5/1) has confusing East Coast form. It took him a while to break his maiden, but when he did, he did it on synth. His starts against winners were just okay, and clearly, something went wrong with him back in April when he got beat a country mile when dropping into a claimer. George Sharp is a good owner, and I like that this runner comes back, making his first SoCal start, while being protected by Yakteen. The fact that Rispoli shows up tells me that this guy is live—but he'll have to work out a trip. GRADE: B.

#11 OOBUBBAKAKAYO (20/1) hasn't been able to beat conditional-claimers, which means he's in deep today, especially while breaking from a tough outside post. GRADE: X.

#12 DEALERS SPECIAL (4/1) (AE) would be a contender if he got in, but you'd also have to think about this tough post. Last time, he ran a very good second over this course and distance while racing at a similar level. He was 17/10 that day, so everyone and their brother knew he was a good fit at this level. Plus, he lost to a pretty honest horse in that race, so no shame there. GRADE: B.

#13 SIENNOIS (IRE) (6/1) (AE) has done decent work against some pretty good horses. In fact, he came home respectably against stakes foes last time, so I'm confused as to why D'Amato is

ready to give up on him for \$50K. I don't like that at all, especially since he's a lightly raced 3-year-old who still has plenty of upside. His class could prevail, but clearly there's an issue here. GRADE: C.

#14 NIGHT OUT (5/1) (AE), another D'Amato, dropped into a conditional-claimer last time, went off as the favorite, and finished a well-beaten fifth. Granted, he had a terrible trip, so it's encouraging that J.J. wants to ride back and try to make amends. Still, this is a tough post. J.J. will have to just angle over while anchoring out the back and then try to make one big run. Maybe for underneath. GRADE: C.

CONCLUSION

There are lots of places to land in this race—it's one of the more competitive races we've seen all meet. I really don't have a top pick. I'll look at the tote and make my decision between my three "A's." The fact that I have three "A's"—and I could have had more—tells you that I don't have a strong feel for the race, but at the same time, it's such a good race to try and catch a price. So that means I'll likely end up on **#1 SIX MAGPIES (IRE) (20/1)**. There is not much separating this horse from the logical contenders. That mile race was sneaky good, and he galloped out really well. If you think I'm crazy, **#2 BALDORO (9/2)** is very logical, and if **#8 BAD TO THE BONES (8/1)** takes some money, then you can consider those two as well.

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